

IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE
IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. XIX

JUNE, 1949

NO. 2



OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

President—Ralph W. Johnson, Ames, Iowa

Vice-President—Dr. Robert F. Vane, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Sec'y-Treas.—Miss Lillian Serbousek, 1226 Second St. S.W.,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Librarian—Dr. J. Harold Ennis, Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa

Editor—Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop, Iowa

Executive Council:

Albert C. Berkowitz, Des Moines, Iowa

Mrs. A. T. Lambert, Sioux City, Iowa

E. A. Kurth, Grinnell, Iowa

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; 'The Bulletin,' 1929-1930; 'Iowa Bird Life,' beginning 1931.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$1.00 a year. Single copies 25c each. Subscription to the magazine is included in all paid memberships, of which there are four classes, as follows: Contributing Member, \$10.00 a year; Supporting Member, \$3.00 a year; Regular Member, \$1.00 a year; Junior Member (under 16 years of age), 50c a year.

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA

Entered as second-class matter February 9, 1932, at the post office at Winthrop, Iowa, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

SOME RECENT CHANGES IN BIRD RANGES IN THE STATE OF IOWA

By CHARLES A. STEWART

NEW ALBIN, IOWA

This article is a condensation of the discussion held at a Forum at the joint meeting of the Iowa and Nebraska Ornithologists' Unions at Sioux City, Iowa, 1948. Participating in the discussion was a panel consisting of Dr. T. C. Stephens, Dr. R. Allyn Moser and the writer; the membership of the unions present and a delegation from South Dakota also took an active part in the discussion.

Because of the recent and much lamented death of Dr. Stephens, Wm. Youngworth kindly consented to review this report. He suggested species in western Iowa that have recently changed their ranges. We wish to thank Mr. Youngworth for his valued contribution.

As the time assigned to the Forum was limited, it was not possible to cover all the species which have changed ranges or which are showing a tendency in that direction; but most of the important changes were discussed in some detail. The comparison of range changes and the increase in numbers in certain areas were based on the state records given in Anderson's "Birds of Iowa" (1907) and DuMont's similar work published in 1933. The directions of range changes discussed were from south to north, east to west, and west to east.

The south-to-north changes involved the greatest number of species. It was pointed out that the movement of southern birds northward was much more extensive in the eastern part of the state, particularly in the Mississippi valley, than in the Missouri valley in the western part of the state. This was explained by the milder climate along the Mississippi River as a possible cause, but what was more important, by the fact that most of the birds moving northward were birds of the deciduous forests. In moving northward along the Mississippi River they remained in the same major biotic community. In moving northward along the Missouri River they were in a deciduous forest-grassland ecotone and in the northwest corner of the state, into the grasslands. It was felt that this was the explanation of the greater northward movement in the Mississippi valley rather than any climatic difference.

Possible Causes of Range Changes

A condensation of the rather extensive discussion as to causes of range changes is as follows: The warming of the climate in reference to south-to-north changes; the increased humidity permitting eastern birds to move west; the cutting of the timber in the east, bringing about grassland conditions, made possible west-to-east movements; the cultivation of the soil driving certain grassland birds westward. These changes in ecological conditions were considered as secondary or enabling causes but not the primary cause of the state of a range change. The movement north and west of farming with the consequent increase in insect life and weed seeds to which the birds were accustomed, was cited as an enabling cause or possibly a primary cause of range changes. The greatest weight was placed on the biologic or evolutionary urge as the cause of starting of a range change, just as this has been the apparent cause of range changes in the past for a number of species.

The discharge of internal secretions into the blood stream was discussed in some detail. The swelling of the sexual glands prior to and during migration presupposes the discharge of an internal secretion which may be a motivating cause for the start of the spring migration. The powers of flight and apparent increase in energy during migration has been thought to be possibly

due to the discharge into the blood stream of a substance similar to adrenalin. Giving consideration to the above thoughts, it is not a far step to suppose that the discharge of an internal secretion may motivate the individuals of a species and start a range change, as these changes usually start by the movement of a few individuals of a species.

Species Discussed as Recently Changing Their Ranges in Iowa

AMERICAN EGRET (*Casmerodius albus egretia*). Some objection to including this species in the discussion was made on the ground that range changes should only consider breeding birds, but because of the general interest, the species is included. Early explorers speak of the presence of white herons both on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. These are believed to have been American Egrets. Anderson gave the species as casual in Iowa at the time of his publication. During the post-nuptial migration this species has shown a marked increase in numbers in eastern Iowa, particularly along the Mississippi River. In the year of 1948 the numbers in northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota were very great. As the egret seems to be recovering its former post-nuptial range, the numbers on the Missouri River may increase.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus lineatus*). Anderson gave the species as a common summer resident in the southeastern part of the state, rare in the north and not present in the west. This bird is fairly plentiful in all parts of the eastern portion of the state and has moved northward into southern Minnesota. Is a breeder in the Missouri Valley as far north as the vicinity of Omaha and Council Bluffs, but is reported rare in the vicinity of Sioux City and northward.

PILEATED WOODPECKER (*Hylatomus pileatus*). Anderson stated that this bird was formerly a not uncommon resident in the heavily wooded sections of the state. The picture has changed and the bird is seen in Iowa in greatly restricted numbers. Probably northeast Iowa has the greatest population. In contrast to the situation in Iowa, Minnesota reports increased numbers. This species has evidently moved northward into the heavier timber.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*). This bird is moving eastward in the state. Anderson stated that this bird was rarely seen in the state but quoted reports as frequently having been seen in the vicinity of Omaha. This bird is now common in the vicinity of Council Bluffs and is seen quite frequently in the vicinity of Sioux City, with occasional reports from points farther east.

ACADIAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax virens*). Anderson reported this bird as a common breeder south of a line drawn across the state in the center, seldom reaching the northern part. This bird has not moved northward with the rapidity of some of the other species but is now breeding in the eastern part of the state close to the Minnesota line but is rare in the northwest.

TUFTED TITMOUSE (*Parus bicolor*). The titmouse is one of the outstanding of the northward travelers. Anderson listed this bird as a rather rare resident, seldom reaching the northern part of the state. At present the bird is distributed fairly well throughout the state, though not in the number seen in states farther south. It has also extended its range into eastern Minnesota toward the southern part. The northward movement has been greater in eastern Iowa as it is rare in the northwestern part.

CAROLINA WREN (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*). Anderson spoke of this bird as rare and local in Iowa, but had been reported in Minnesota. The species is still rare and local in the northern part of the state but is a breeder in northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota, though not in numbers. Also is found as far north as the central part of the state along the Missouri River. This is one of the species moving northward more slowly.

MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos polyglottos*). Anderson listed this species as a rare summer visitor in southern Iowa. At the present time, Dr. Keck (Iowa Bird Life, Vol. XVI, No. 2) states that this bird is fairly well distributed over the state as far north as central Iowa. In the northern part it is still casual, but a number of reports indicate a distinct northward movement. Attention should be called to the increased wintering of the species in Iowa.

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER (*Proionotaria citrea*). From the standpoint of distance, this species is outstanding among southern migrant birds that have moved northward. Anderson listed it as a fairly common summer resident in the river bottoms of southern Iowa and farther north in the Mississippi valley. At present the species has extended its range along the Mississippi River into central Minnesota and is a fairly common breeder in northeast Iowa's river bottoms. It has not moved as far north in the west but is locally present in northwest Iowa.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*). Anderson gave this warbler as a tolerably common breeder as far north as the central part of the state. At the present time the bird is a fairly common breeder in the eastern part of the state to the Minnesota line and has moved into Minnesota. The progress northward has not been so pronounced in the west as it is seldom reported in northwest Iowa.

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT (*Icteria virens virens*). Anderson gave this bird as a common summer resident as far north as the center part of the state. The picture has changed in recent years as the marked northward movement of this bird is now going on. In the east it is a very common breeder up to and across the Minnesota state line, and has almost duplicated this movement in the west part of the state.

CARDINAL (*Richmondia cardinalis*). The Cardinal is usually given as the best example of a southern bird that has moved northward. This movement started many years ago as Anderson in 1907 said that the bird was apparently extending its range northward, but was more abundant in the southern and central parts of the state. Now the bird is common in all parts of the state but slightly more abundant in the east than in the west. It is common in southern Minnesota.

EASTERN and WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*, *Sturnella neglecta*). There has been a practical interchange of territory between these two species in Iowa. The eastern species has moved to the Missouri River though now much outnumbered by the western species in this area. The extent of the movement has been greater in the southern part of the state. The western species has moved into east-central Iowa but has not as yet reached the bottom lands of the Mississippi River.

THE MCGREGOR CONVENTION

By LILLIAN SERBOUSEK

Secy.-Treas., Iowa Ornithologists' Union

The 27th annual convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, held at McGregor, Iowa, Saturday and Sunday, May 14 and 15, 1949, was unique in that field trips took the place of the customary program of papers, reports and illustrated lectures during the first day of the session. Small groups of observers were in evidence before and after registration Saturday morning, but they did not tarry long as the calls of birds were too loud on all sides of the convention headquarters, the Heights Hotel, which is in a beautiful setting of woodland on "the Heights" high above the city of McGregor. Most of the small groups returned for Saturday luncheon, and late that afternoon everyone returned and assembled for the banquet and evening program.

Members of the Dubuque Audubon Club were the hosts and made all arrangements for the convention.

During the Saturday noon luncheon, at the Heights Hotel, Dr. J. Harold Ennis, chairman of a special committee appointed at the 1948 convention, reported that his committee deemed it advisable not to affiliate with the Wilson Ornithological Club at this time, and to keep the number of members on the Union's Executive Council at three. A motion was made and seconded that this report be accepted; motion was carried.

Field trips for the afternoon were announced. One trip was to the Sny Magill Indian mounds area, where Ellison Orr, well-known archaeologist member of our Union of Waukon, explained the history and character of the mounds found in that region. The north trip, led by Arthur Palas, included Yellow River, Waukon Junction and Harper's Ferry. Others remained nearer headquarters and birded in Pike's Peak State Park and on McGregor Heights. On the combined Saturday trips 135 species of birds were reported.

The annual Ornithologists' Banquet was served at the Heights Hotel at 6:30 p.m. Saturday. The long tables were centered with Wild crab apple blossoms, lilacs and pastel-colored candles, and at each plate was a bird place-card. After the banquet we gathered at the outdoor auditorium for the evening program. President Ayres, in behalf of the Union, thanked Albert Berkowitz for furnishing and printing our letterheads without cost to the organization, and for the contribution of \$8.90 collected from the sale of checklists prepared and printed by him. A memorial honoring the late Dr. T. C. Stephens of Sioux City was next on the evening program. Fitting tributes were presented by Arthur J. Palas, Dr. Mary Roberts, Bruce F. Stiles, Dr. J. Harold Ennis and Charles C. Ayres, Jr. They told of incidents and accomplishments of Dr. Stephens, particularly as an Iowa ornithologist and as a member of our Union.

Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, of Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, was the guest speaker Saturday evening. He explained briefly the nature of his new book, "Guide to Bird Finding," which is being completed. He said that he hoped to have included in it the description of a good bird area near every large city in America. Dr. Pettingill stated that Ornithology has reached its maturity and has gone beyond the observation stage. To continue and to further the interest in Ornithology, projects such as life history studies of common birds, bird distribution, and bird populations must supplement bird observations. He then showed an excellent film of colored motion pictures called "Birds that Haunt the Waterways." Among the birds that he had photographed were Killdeer, Spotted Sandpipers, Franklin's Gulls, Long-billed Marsh Wrens, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Pied-billed Grebes, Caspian Terns, Ospreys, Red-backed Sandpipers, American and Snowy Egrets; these pictures had been taken at Heron Lake in Minnesota, Douglas Lake in Michigan, at the McIlhenny Bird Refuge in Louisiana, and other places. Pictures of nests, eggs and behavior studies of the young of many of these species were included.

Sunday breakfast at the Heights Hotel was served at 5 a.m. to those participating in the field trips which followed. Three trips were scheduled to the same areas as were visited on Saturday. The leaders were Oscar P. Allert, Fred J. Pierce, Arthur J. Palas, Dr. Martin Grant, Charles C. Ayres, Jr., and Myrle L. Jones. All groups returned to the hotel for one-o'clock luncheon, after which the list of birds observed by the combined groups was compiled. It totalled 136 species and the grand total of different species seen during the two days was 144.

A business meeting followed the luncheon. Minutes of the 1948 convention were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was read and accepted;

it showed a balance of \$451.80. Dr. Charles A. Stewart reported that the Executive Council had audited the Treasurer's books and found them correct and in good form. Mr. Ayres read the Librarian's report in the absence of Librarian Ennis. The Librarian expressed thanks to Glenn Hathorn of Cedar Rapids for his gift of a complete file of 16 volumes of "Iowa Bird Life" to be added to the Union's library. Dr. Ennis asked for permission to have these volumes bound and to draw on the treasury for payment. He also asked permission to purchase two spring-back binders if and when the Des Moines Audubon Society and the Sioux City Bird Club give the library complete files of their publications. Both requests were voted upon favorably. Dr. Ennis in his report made a general request for gifts to the library from members.

Albert Berkowitz read the Resolutions, which were approved and adopted. The Resolutions were as follows:

"Be it hereby resolved by the members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union assembled at McGregor on May 14 and 15, that a message be sent to Mrs. T. C. Stephens advising her of the fine tributes which were presented by members of the Union at this meeting. These presentations were made by Arthur J. Palas, Dr. Mary Roberts, Bruce F. Stiles, Dr. Harold Ennis and Charles Ayres, Jr. These tributes included recounting of incidents and the accomplishments of the late Dr. Stephens in the field of ornithology, and in connection with Iowa ornithology particularly. Be it further resolved that a proper copy of this resolution be inscribed in the minutes of this meeting and kept in the Union's permanent record.

"Be it further resolved that we express our thanks and appreciation to the Dubuque Audubon Club for making detailed arrangements for the convention.

"Be it further resolved that we express our appreciation to the management of the Heights Hotel for making it possible for the Union to use the hotel for their headquarters.

"Be it further resolved that we thank the outgoing officers for the good work done during their term of office.

"Be it further resolved that the Union express its regrets at the deaths of two members, Mrs. Henry Frankel and Mrs. E. C. Gessell, both of Des Moines."

George E. Crossley, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, submitted the names of the new officers for the coming year. These are as given on the title page of this issue of "Iowa Bird Life," and it will be noted that the President and the Members of the Executive Council are the only new officers, the others having been retained. No nominations were given from the floor and the above officers were elected by unanimous ballot cast by the Secretary upon motion of the voting members.

Mr. Ayres urged each member to obtain at least one new member during the coming year and expressed thanks to the outgoing officers and to those who remain in office for the good work accomplished during the past year, and to all members for their cooperation.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Pierce again invited the members to hold a fall meeting at their home in Winthrop. It was agreed that this be an all-day meeting with a dinner served at noon.

A rising vote of thanks was given to our outgoing President, after which the convention was officially adjourned. Everyone agreed that this was one of the most enjoyable conventions in the history of the organization, and somewhat reluctantly returned to their homes.

A LETTER FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Fellow Members:

The annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union on McGregor Heights was a "mountain top" experience to all of us. Wonderful scenery was around about us at all times. The unusual birds accommodated us by making their appearance at the proper time. Such a feast for the eyes and ears!—Ruffed Grouse, Pileated Woodpecker, Duck Hawk, Wood Duck, Orchard Oriole, and the many warblers, especially the Kentucky, Cerulean and Prothonotary. Such a fine list was satisfying to us. A return pilgrimage to northeast Iowa near the middle of May any year should be profitable.

Putting on a convention from a distance of 70 miles is no snap. The efficient work of the members of the Dubuque Audubon Club deserves high commendation, for the cooperative effort of those individuals made an almost impossible task appear easy. Their hospitality and courtesy are appreciated by all who were in attendance.

To some extent I hope I can deserve the confidence you have expressed by electing me President for the ensuing year. I hope to continue and expand the work done by my predecessors, who have given such splendid service.

Iowa needs more birds and birders. More birds will appear if we show them we are friendly. In rural areas the ponds and streams, wooded tracts and some fence rows should have a semblance of seclusion. Also our yards and parks in the cities and towns can be made inviting by setting aside a part for shrubbery and a birdbath for spring and summer, while feeding trays and shelter will attract the winter residents the remainder of the year. As to an



RALPH W. JOHNSON

increase in birders, that can be accomplished best through enthusiasm and additional work. In order to obtain new members we should catch them young by organizing Junior Clubs in the schools of the state. The sponsors of such clubs should be someone from the local club and a teacher in the school where the club of youngsters is located. All will not continue in the bird field, but it will start youth on a hobby quest, which will be beneficial to the future of Iowa.

During the summer I expect to send a letter to a leader in each club giving in more detail the method of accomplishing the two goals mentioned. Your cooperation and support will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

RALPH W. JOHNSON

Attendance Register.—AMES, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Johnson, Ed L. Kozicky; BOONE, Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones, Barbara, Charles and Loren Jones; CEDAR FALLS, Dr. and Mrs. M. L. Grant; CEDAR RAPIDS, Dorothy Brunner, Miriam Confare, Esther Copp, Margaret Dickey, Margaret Lahr, Duane Nesetril, Ruth Purdy, Lillian Serbousek, Dr. and Mrs. Robt. Vane, Myra Willis; CHARLES CITY, Mrs. E. J. Austin, Mrs. R. C. McCartney; CRESTON, Mr. and Mrs. U. M. McGuire; DAVENPORT, Mr. and Mrs. Harry G. Carl, Fred T. Hall, Norwood Hazard, James Hodges, Richard Schaefer, Hal Yeaton; DECORAH, Angie Henning, Kay Henning, Mrs. T. T. Henning; DES MOINES, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Berkowitz, Mr. and Mrs. Woodward Brown, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Binsfeld, Mrs. Jos. Chamberlain, Mrs. W. G. DuMont, Lester F. Faber, Dr. and Mrs. H. R. Peasley, Bruce F. Stiles; DEWITT, Jack Perkins, Arlen Peahl; DUBUQUE, Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Baumgartner, Henry Hermann, Ed Heuser, Eleanor Little, Gertrude Merritt, Florence Merritt, David Reed, Mrs. R. S. Ruegnitz, Mrs. Shambaugh, Ival Schuster, Edra Walter, Mary Young, Mike Cahill, Mrs. Ebben, Mr. and Mrs. Neil Lutes, Mr. and Mrs. Pregler, Eugene Thielen; FARLEY, Mr. and Mrs. George Crossley; GRINNELL, Bill Doyl, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Kurth, Graeme George, Conard Schallou, David Thomas; GRUNDY CENTER, Mrs. J. R. King; INDEPENDENCE, Randall Evanson, Ruth Funk, Grace Leigh; INDIANOLA, Paul Leaverton; IOWA CITY, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Kent, Tom Kent, Dr. and Mrs. P. P. Laude, Knute Nomland, Dr. Rueben Nomland, Richard Turner; MCGREGOR, Oscar P. Allert, Florence Clark, Milo Peterson; MT. VERNON, David Ennis, Dr. J. Harold Ennis; NEW ALBIN, Dr. Chas. A. Stewart; NEWTON, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Agar, Bob Little, Lucille McMurray, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Moore; OTTUMWA, Chas. Ayres, Jr., Chas. Ayres, Sr., Marietta Eighme, Bill Hoskins; POSTVILLE, Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Palas, Fritz and Gretchen Palas; SIOUX CITY, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Lambert; SPIRIT LAKE, Dr. and Mrs. F. L. R. Roberts; TAMA, Thelma Carmichael, Mrs. J. G. Ennis, Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, Mrs. Earl Soth; VINTON, Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Pierce; WATERLOO, Mrs. John Barlow, Murle Burke, George Faulkner, Russell Hays, Lucile and Myra Loban, Mrs. L. Myers, Carrie Neidy, Pearl Rader, Dr. A. W. Robertson, Ida Wade, Katherine Young; WAUKON, Ellison Orr; WINTHROP, Earl Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Pierce; MADISON, WIS., Mr. and Mrs. Walter E. Scott; NORTHFIELD, MINN., Dr. Olin S. Pettingill, Jr. Total registered, 139.

Birds Seen on the Field Trip.—Three trips: Yellow River and Waukon Junction, Harper's Ferry, Sny Magill Bottoms; Clayton and Allamakee Counties, Iowa, May 15, 1949.

Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue and Green Herons, American Egret, Mallard, Black, Shoveller, Wood and Scaup Ducks, Blue-winged Teal, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed, Red-

shouldered, Broad-winged and Duck Hawks, Osprey, Ruffed Grouse, Bob-white, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sora, Killdeer, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Forster's (or Common) Tern, Mourning Dove, Yellow- and Black-billed Cuckoos, Great Horned and Barred Owls, Whip-poor-will, Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Ruby-thr. Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Flicker, Pileated, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers, Eastern Kingbird, Crested, Yellow-bellied, Least and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Prairie Horned Lark, Bank, Rough-winged and Barn Swallows, Purple Martin, Blue Jay, Crow, Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House, Bewick's and Short-billed Marsh Wrens, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Robin, Wood, Olive-backed and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Bluebird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Starling, Bell's, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Red-eyed, Philadelphia and Warbling Vireos, Black and White, Prothonotary, Golden-winged, Blue-winged, Tenn., Nashville, Yellow, Magnolia, Cape May, Myrtle, Black-thr. Green, Cerulean, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Black-poll, Palm, Kentucky, Mourning, Wilson's and Canada Warblers, Oven-bird, Grinnell's and Louisiana Water-thrushes, Northern Yellow-throat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Redstart, Bobolink, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Red-winged and Brewer's (Bill Doyle) Blackbirds, Orchard and Baltimore Orioles, Bronzed Grackle, Cowbird, Scarlet Tanager, Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak (Mrs. R. C. McCartney, Mrs. E. J. Austin, Myra Loban), Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Goldfinch, Red-eyed Towhee, English, Savannah, Grasshopper, Henslow's, Vesper, Chipping, Clay-colored, Field, Harris's, White-throated, Lincoln's, Swamp and Song Sparrows. Total, 136 species.

FALL MEETING AT WINTHROP

Plans are in the making for a fall "get-together" meeting to be held at Winthrop, on Sunday, September 18. The two previous fall meetings have been enjoyable and well attended, and many of our members have indicated a desire to return to Winthrop for another meeting this fall. This is to be an all-day affair, so plan to come as early as you may care to on that day. There will be field trips both morning and afternoon (Buffalo Creek is near by). Those who prefer to sit and visit will find chairs and company at the Pierce home. There will be a basket dinner at noon and a luncheon in the evening. We hope to have an evening's entertainment of moving pictures or slides on birds accompanied by a bird lecture from our own talent. It is too early to give very definite information on this meeting, but we hope you will keep the date of September 18 open and plan to be with us. An announcement will be sent to each member early in September.

GENERAL NOTES

Towhee as a Winter Resident in Emmet County.—A male Red-eyed Towhee spent the winter of 1948-49 in the woods at High Lake in Emmet County. It was a frequent, often daily visitor at a feeding station at the home of Fred Wolden there. The station was quite near a window and the bird was easily observed during its visits. It was rather domineering and as a rule did not permit other birds at the station while it was feeding.—B. O. WOLDEN, Estherville, Iowa.

On the Placing of Nesting Material.—Many persons make a practice of placing nesting material for the use of birds in building their nests. A word

of caution is offered. Long nesting material may result in the death of birds. Sometimes a bird becomes a victim when the nesting material it is carrying gets wrapped around a twig and its neck in such a manner that it is unable to extricate itself before death results. Such was the case with a female Robin that had become entangled in a long piece of store string while constructing its nest in May, 1948, the specimen brought to me by Rodney Hart. —JAMES HODGES, Davenport, Iowa.

Sprague's Pipit in Northwest Iowa.—We saw two Sprague's Pipits on April 23, 1949. They were observed at close range and in good light. The striped back, small bill, faintly streaked breast, and complete absence of tail-wagging were all observed. We have seen them in western states before, but we have never been sure of an Iowa record, though we have several times seen Pipits which we did not differentiate definitely from the American. —F. L. R. ROBERTS, Spirit Lake, Iowa.

The Blue Jay as a Predator.—The note by Dr. Ennis in the December 1948, issue of "Iowa Bird Life," on the Blue Jay preying on the English Sparrow, reminds me that I have frequently seen jays kill every nestling in an English Sparrow's nest, and then proceed to devour the young birds. It is suggested that the jays may contribute considerably to the high mortality rate of English Sparrow nestlings in urban and rural areas. Though Blue Jays may not be very common in some localities, they nevertheless have a pronounced effect on the number of young English Sparrows reared each season. —JAMES HODGES, Davenport, Iowa.

A Bird Trip on the Mississippi.—On April 2, 1949, David Luckstead and I travelled up to Sabula, Iowa, for a bird trip along the Mississippi River. We thought we had a very successful trip. I added two new birds to my life list—the Hooded Merganser and the Swamp Sparrow. The Hooded Merganser was observed at close range without the use of binoculars. We were driving along a road which ran through the backwaters of the Mississippi, when we spotted the pair of mergansers. We stopped the car beside the road and were within 75 feet of the birds. The sun was shining bright, and the colors of the mergansers glistened and stood out perfectly. The female immediately paddled away from the shore for some distance, but the male showed no alarm at first. He swam back and forth a few times, eyeing us, all the while slowly edging out and away from us, until he was too far out to observe well.

We were wading through some shallow water and brush on an island in the same slough when a sparrow flitted out 15 feet away. It kept flying a little ways ahead of us, or hopping along through the brush and grass, disappearing and reappearing. We identified it (after getting our feet wet) as a Swamp Sparrow.

While exploring this same island, we surprised several ducks, two Black Ducks, three Canvas-backs, a pair of Mallards, several large flocks of Buffleheads, and a Scoter. As we approached the end of the island, we surprised a Pied-billed Grebe. It was in the water a few feet off shore with just its head and neck above water, but it soon dived and reappeared far out in the pond. Later we saw two other grebes, and still another that was floating along with its head under its wing, suggesting a stump sticking up out of the water on first sight.

Other birds seen on this trip included Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Bronzed Grackle, Herring Gull, Robin, Bluebird, Red-shouldered Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Meadowlark, Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers. —ARLEN PEAHL, DeWitt, Iowa.

Whistling Swans in Hamilton County.—On March 27, 1949, we were observing birds at Goose Lake, near Jewell in Hamilton County. After watching Shovellers, Coots, Scaups, Greater and Lesser Yellow-legs, and away across the lake a few Snow and Blue Geese, about a dozen Canada Geese landed. As we left the lake, we were attracted by two large white birds, at the southwest part of the lake. We walked across a large field to the railroad. This gave us good elevation, and we found that the white birds were Whistling Swans, the first we had ever seen and providing us with one of our biggest thrills of the year. Another group of nature students, from Ames, saw the swans at Goose Lake later in the day.—MRS. R. W. JOHNSON, Ames, Iowa.

Shorebirds.—In the late afternoon of May 22, 1949, while returning from an all-day picnic and hike with Miss Young and Miss Rader, I saw a flock of sandpipers in a small pond and we stopped to watch them. We identified Lesser Yellow-legs, Least, Semipalmated and Baird's Sandpipers. A phalarope included in the flock proved to be a Northern Phalarope and a new bird to all of us. The sun was setting and put the birds in perfect light for study with our two pairs of modern, coated-lens binoculars. The phalarope at one time came to a tiny islet not 40 feet from us, and we got fine views of it as it preened its feathers. The red collar almost encircled the breast and the top of the head was very dark. Our list for the day was 73 species, which we thought was very good for so late in the month.—RUSSELL HAYS, Waterloo, Iowa.

Large "Sets" of Cowbird Eggs.—In "The Wilson Bulletin", 1947, vol. 59, pp. 83-103, Russell T. Norris reports that out of 237 nests of eggs located by him in Pennsylvania, he found 73 nests containing Cowbird eggs. Of these 73 nests, he found 45 containing 1 Cowbird egg each, 21 containing 2 Cowbird eggs and 7 nests with 3 Cowbird eggs.

This recalls to mind that during my observations in Iowa, nests with Cowbird eggs were equally plentiful and even larger "sets" of Cowbird eggs were located than reported by Norris. Among the larger sets were the following, all found at Des Moines:

A nest of Wood Thrush on June 1, 1907, with 4 Cowbird and 1 Wood Thrush eggs.

A nest of Wood Thrush on June 4, 1907, with 4 Cowbird and 3 Wood Thrush eggs.

A nest of Wood Thrush on June 7, 1907, with 5 Cowbird and 1 Wood Thrush eggs.

A nest of Wood Thrush on June 11, 1907, with 5 Cowbird and 1 Wood Thrush eggs.

A nest of Wood Thrush on May 20, 1908, with 4 Cowbird and 1 Wood Thrush eggs. An additional Cowbird egg was in the nest on the following day and the Wood Thrush egg was gone.

A nest of Wood Thrush on June 29, 1908, with 5 Cowbird eggs and no Wood Thrush eggs. On ground below was 1 more Cowbird egg broken and 1 Wood Thrush egg also broken.

A nest of Towhee on May 6, 1914, with 4 Cowbird and 3 Towhee eggs.

Many other nests were located at Des Moines with from 1 to 3 Cowbird eggs.

In California I have so far located no nest with more than one Cowbird egg. It seems that Iowa is a prolific breeding ground for *Molothrus*.—EMERSON A. STONER, Benicia, California.

Mourning Doves Nesting on Old Squirrel Nests.—Adult bird students don't usually climb to every vestige of foreign material they see in a tree. However, as a boy very enthusiastic about the outdoors, I enjoyed climbing trees to investigate everything that looked at all interesting during my frequent roamings through the oak-hickory-walnut belts about Des Moines.

I so frequently found Mourning Doves' nests and eggs on top of large accumulations of dry leaves that at first it became a part of my juvenile birdlore that doves built the entire structure, leaves, sticks and all. Subsequently I found that Mourning Doves built only a flimsy structure on top of the peck or so of leaves and sticks accumulated in the trees by grey squirrels; also that doves often used other foundations such as old birds' nests on which to deposit their eggs as well as on old squirrel nests.

I mention this frequent custom of doves superimposing their own nests on squirrel nests as I don't believe I have seen reference to it in the bird literature—although it is of common knowledge that old birds' nests are used. —EMERSON A. STONER, Benicia, California.

Saw-whet Owl at Coggon.—On the afternoon of March 6, 1949, my husband, my son Robert, and a neighbor lad went on a bird hike near Coggon. They had found some Tufted Titmice and were amusing themselves by imitating their calls and having the titmice answer them, after which the two boys decided to climb a tree. Suddenly they called, "Oh, here is a baby owl with the cutest little face!" They caught the owl, which was a Saw-whet Owl and not a baby owl at all. The boys went to a nearby farmhouse, borrowed an old canary cage, and came home excitedly with their prize. They carried the owl around to several persons' homes in Coggon, then released it that evening in the outskirts of town. Not long afterward we were in Cedar Rapids for a meeting of the bird club. A number of the members said they had never seen a Saw-whet and expressed regret that they had missed this chance to see the bird.

The boys went hunting for their Saw-whet again. On March 20 they found it $2\frac{1}{2}$ blocks from where it was released. A bird cage was brought into use again, and the little owl was placed in it for further travels and display. It was fed raw liver and other meat while in confinement and it seemed to do well on this diet. On one trip the Saw-whet was taken to Winthrop for a visit in Editor Pierce's home, where Paul Pierce took a number of flash-bulb pictures of it.

On the night of March 30, we attended the Audubon Screen Tour in Cedar Rapids, with the Saw-whet accompanying us in its cage. Bert Harwell, the famous bird imitator, was the speaker on this tour. He evinced immediate interest in the owl, and had the cage brought to the speaker's platform in St. Paul's Methodist Church. Before beginning his lecture, Mr. Harwell gave an extended description of the calls of owls and imitated many of them. His imitations of the calls of the Saw-whet were long and painstaking, while he talked to the little owl, which sat in the cage in view of 600 or more people. Mr. Harwell hoped to get the Saw-whet to respond to his calls with some of its own, but in spite of his best efforts, the owl failed to appreciate its opportunity to perform before such a distinguished gathering, headed by a nationally known naturalist, and said never a word!

On April 2 the Saw-whet was released in the thicket where it was originally found. Knute J. Nomland was there at the time and took some photographs of the bird, one of which is reproduced here. The tameness of the little owl made it a subject for easy photography. We are hoping that it may have a mate in the neighborhood and will remain as a permanent resident and neighbor.—MRS. WALTER E. PIKE, Coggon, Iowa.



SAW-WHET OWL

Upper photograph was taken by Knute J. Nomland on April 2, 1949, in the thicket where the owl was originally found, near Coggon.



Lower photograph was taken in the Pierce home at Winthrop, by Paul Pierce. In this picture Robert Pike (left) holds the Saw-whet.

Check-list of Iowa Birds.—A supplementary sheet in the April, 1949, issue of "Iowa Conservationist" (published by Iowa Conservation Commission, Des Moines) contains a list of all birds that have been found in the state, a total of 373. The list was compiled by Jack W. Musgrove. Although the reader will gain the impression that this is a list of species, most of the subspecies have also been included, some species with two or three subspecific bird names listed beside them but not differentiated in any way. This may be somewhat confusing to the readers of "Iowa Conservationist", among whom are large numbers of casual bird watchers. Subspecies are troublesome even for those who are well up in the professional class. In Mr. Musgrove's list scientific names follow the common names of the birds as well as key letters which tell whether the bird is accidental, permanent resident, summer resident, etc. If this newest check-list does no more than to awaken an interest in birds and make people want to learn more about them, it will serve a useful purpose.—F. J. P.

Book on Collecting Animals by Anderson.—Dr. Rudolph Martin Anderson is quite well known in Iowa (his biography appeared in Iowa Bird Life, March, 1942, issue). He was born at Decorah, was educated at the University of Iowa, and wrote the "Birds of Iowa" (1907) as a thesis for the Ph. D. degree from that institution. After leaving the state, he became associated with the National Museum of Canada, and later became its Chief of the Division of Biology. He spent many years of his life in the study of Canadian mammals and wild life, both as a researcher and a field student. Accompanying many scientific expeditions, he has done field work in every territory and province of Canada, as well as in Alaska. Dr. Anderson has done extensive writing, and one of his most useful publications is his handbook of "Methods of Collecting and Preserving Vertebrate Animals."

The first edition of this book was prepared in 1932 and found an immediate and grateful clientele of collectors and museum workers who had been in need of just such a handbook on the best methods of collecting and preserving mammals, birds, fishes and other animals. The first edition proved to be so popular and so much in demand, it was soon exhausted. A second, revised edition was published early this year, and is now available to those who desire the book (applicants should write to the Dept. of Mines and Resources, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa). The book contains 162 pages, there are 48 text drawings, and an 11-page bibliography. The chapters cover such subjects as: "General Principles of Zoological Collecting", with descriptions of tools and the care of specimens taken in the field; "Collecting Mammals"; "Skinning Mammals"; "Collecting and Skinning Birds"; "Collecting Reptiles, Amphibians and Fishes"; "Collecting Skeletons". Dr. Anderson has given a most useful handbook to the growing ranks of collectors and museum workers, who will be long in his debt.—F. J. P.

We are setting up every line of available copy for this issue of "Iowa Bird Life." This means that unless there is a generous contribution of bird articles during the next three months, the September issue will be very thin. We would like to publish reports on the activities of our local bird clubs. Why not send an article on your local club this summer, for publication this fall? If you had a good vacation trip, let us hear about it. We have featured the vacation trips of our members in the last two September issues. Bird notes and membership news are always of interest. The Editor of "Iowa Bird Life" works on the magazine under a serious spare-time handicap. It would lighten his task if there were an adequate supply of suitable manuscript on hand during the entire year, instead of the usual seasonal supply.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Everyone enjoyed the convention to the fullest extent. Opinions were unanimous that the McGregor region contains some of the finest birding grounds and the most beautiful scenery in the state. We heard a number of people say that they planned to return next year for a week-end in May. It would be a fine thing if more bird students availed themselves of the opportunities of the region, which has not been very thoroughly studied in recent years. The McGregor territory is certainly worth all the time that can be spent there. The Wild Life School, conducted for many years on "The Heights" in August, drew nature lovers from all parts of the country. McGregor lost a great deal when the school was discontinued.

Charles C. Ayres, Jr., has been giving a series of radio talks over the Ottumwa radio station each Friday night at 8 p.m. It is a 15-minute program sponsored by the Animal Relief League of Ottumwa. He has called his talk "In Nature's Realm", with many aspects of natural history commented upon. The talks have been very well received and have aroused much interest in nature on the part of the listeners.

Mrs. Ivan Boyd, formerly of Dubuque, writes from Baldwin City, Kansas, that she and her husband thought of the Iowa group often during the two days of the convention and wished that they could have been there. She said that the first meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society was held on the week-end of May 21-22 on the Kansas University campus at Lawrence, and they were thrilled to think that the combined efforts of many bird students had culminated in the long-hoped-for state organization. The Baldwin Bird Club, in which Dr. and Mrs. Boyd are very active, had its annual bird census on May 14. A good list was compiled, though there was a very serious shortage of warblers and shorebirds, according to Mrs. Boyd.

In the preparation of the list of meetings of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, contained on the back cover page, it was thought that such a list would be interesting and would embody some historical information. According to our statistics, the 1948 meeting had the largest attendance, while the record bird list was at Cedar Falls in 1937, when 150 species were listed. Some of the data on the early meetings are rather meager, though we have searched the publication files as fully as possible.

As we grow older we are inclined to live somewhat in the past through reminiscence. The Editor recalls the early days of the Union and is glad that he had a small part in forming the organization. Although he was not present at the organization meeting in 1923, he had helped in some of the preliminary work by writing a number of letters to prospective members. He did not have an opportunity to attend a meeting until the third one, in 1925. This was a wonderful event, and he well remembers taking a day or two from business college and boarding a train at Waterloo for Ames. He met many bird people for the first time—those with whom he had corresponded or who were known to him only through reputation. Among these were Walter Rosen, Dr. T. C. Stephens, Walter Bennett, Wier Mills, Rev. LeRoy Titus Weeks, Dr. Charles R. Keyes, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Palas, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Whitney and Rev. George Bennett. We wish that the record as left in the early "Bulletins" had been a little more full and complete, and that we had a few photographs of early scenes and former members. In "Iowa Bird Life" we have tried to print as many photographs of members as we can. We believe that this feature will have considerable historical value. So many of our members are binding their files of "Iowa Bird Life" it seems certain that many complete sets of the little magazine will be available for future reference.

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

	Attendance Registered	No. of species, Field trip	President Elected
1. 1923—Ames, Feb. 28*	about 50*	No trip	Walter M. Rosen
2. 1924—Ames, March 8	"about 50"	No trip	Walter M. Rosen
3. 1925—Ames, Feb. 20-21	"well attended"	No trip	Walter M. Rosen
4. 1926—Atlantic, May 14-15	"about 40"	88	Walter M. Rosen
5. 1927—Des Moines, Apr. 30-May 1	No record	79	Arthur J. Palas
6. 1928—Ames, May 11-12	No record	94	Arthur J. Palas
7. 1929—Sioux City, May 10-11	92	109	Walter W. Bennett
8. 1930—Omaha, Nebr., May 16-17	92	106	Walter W. Bennett
9. 1931—Cedar Rapids, May 8-9	56 (incomplete)	65	Dr. F. L. R. Roberts
10. 1932—Des Moines, May 13-14	100	101	Dr. F. L. R. Roberts
11. 1933—Fairfield, May 5-6	74	120	Dr. George Hendrickson
12. 1934—Ames, May 18-19	62	127	Dr. George Hendrickson
13. 1935—Sioux City, May 10-11-12	135	101	Dr. George Hendrickson
14. 1936—Fairfield, May 8-9	94	136	Myrle L. Jones
15. 1937—Cedar Falls, May 7-8	80	150	Myrle L. Jones
16. 1938—Cedar Rapids, May 6-7	120	115	O. S. Thomas
17. 1939—Spirit Lake, May 12-13	113	128	O. S. Thomas
18. 1940—Dubuque, May 11-12	133	145	Dr. Warren N. Keck
19. 1941—Atlantic, May 10-11	97	126	Dr. Warren N. Keck
20. 1942—Waterloo, May 9-10	91	139	Dr. Martin L. Grant
21. 1943—Cedar Rapids, May 16	39	111	Dr. Martin L. Grant
22. 1944—Des Moines, May 13-14	51	123	Dr. J. Harold Ennis
23. 1945—Ottumwa, May 5-6	124	109	Dr. J. Harold Ennis
24. 1946—Mt. Vernon, May 4-5	138	127	Charles C. Ayres, Jr.
25. 1947—Cedar Falls, May 10-11	137	137	Charles C. Ayres, Jr.
26. 1948—Sioux City, May 15-16	140	130	Charles C. Ayres, Jr.
27. 1949—McGregor, May 14-15	139	136	Ralph W. Johnson

* Organization meeting.